

# MANAS

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## RELIGION IN EDUCATION

THE question of the relationship between science and religion is practically inexhaustible. MANAS recently printed two articles on the subject (in the issues of Nov. 10 and Dec. 29, 1954), and there is now occasion for another such discussion in connection with an excellent pamphlet by Agnes Meyer, *Democracy and Clericalism*, just published by the Beacon Press (Boston, 25 cents).

Our previous articles dealt with the fundamental problem of synthesis. Mrs. Meyer's approach concerns the social relationships which result from the application of religious beliefs to political affairs, and what she regards as the growing menace of "clericalism" in the United States. As an alternative to clerical influence in social decision, she proposes a thorough-going use of scientific method. Her positive thesis is this:

What we need is a concept of science as a method that is neither materialistic nor theological but one that is profoundly humane.

To arrest the development of new scientific methods at this moment, is in effect to guarantee that insecurity, confusion and strife will perpetuate themselves. For science is the most successful organ of general social progress. Those of us are well aware of this who have learned through experience that legal, educational, and social reform is now essential to orderly living and moral regeneration. Our outmoded institutions for education, health, and welfare actually encourage crime, delinquency, and emotional disturbance. Without observation and analysis of our transformed society and the use of controlled experiments, in short of scientific methods, we shall never be able to break down encrusted habits of thought and behavior and create a new morality which can control the powerful instruments of life and death which the natural sciences have devised. It is a platitude to say that our scientific knowledge has outdistanced our ability to use it for constructive ends. Surely if science has destroyed the old traditions and creeds which answered the needs of a pre-technical era, it can also be used to re-create a new integrated society that will heal the split in our culture between theory and practice, between mind and body, between our democratic ideals and our actual behavior. To think that this is impossible is to declare western civilization morally bankrupt at a moment when it must give positive leadership to the whole world. For it is obvious that there must have been something very much awry with the "spirituality" of the past, if it succumbed so readily to the "scientism" of the present. And it is no less obvious that a culture which permits science to destroy the traditional values but which distrusts the power of science to create new ones, is a culture which has lost faith in itself.

This passage, embodying what may be called the affirmative social views of the scientifically minded, establishes one pole of the controversy between science and religion at

the socio-political level. It is a brave statement, but the most vulnerable part of Mrs. Meyer's argument. Of course, she does not say very much about the actual content of the social sciences which are to be called upon for help, so that a lot would depend upon how the specialists and technicians go about designing "controlled experiments" for human betterment, and creating "a new morality which can control the powerful instruments of life and death which the natural sciences have devised." It seems just to observe, however, in regard to the latter idea, that scientific thought, considered in general, is today very far from having formulated anticipatory first principles of a "new morality" of this potency and persuasiveness, yet Mrs. Meyer writes about the project as if it would present no serious problems to the scientific planners themselves, even though the conversion of the public to its acceptance would involve admitted difficulties. But this is a question to which we may return.

Mrs. Meyer begins her critical analysis of clericalism with a definition:

What do we mean by clericalism? The word first came into use in France after the revolution to define the opposition of the Catholic clergy and the Vatican to republican institutions. The best definition I know was formulated by Dr. John Mackay of the Princeton Theological School: "Clericalism is the pursuit of power, especially political power, by a religious hierarchy, carried on by secular methods and for purposes of social domination." What unites clericalists of all faiths is their determination to break down the prime bulwark of American freedom, the wall that separates church and state.

The evidence assembled by Mrs. Meyer of the rising tide of clericalism in the United States is principally of claims by clergymen, both Catholic and Protestant, that "morality can exist only on a dogmatic theological basis." This view, if accepted, obviously justifies a monstrous impatience with all secular forms of social institution, public and private, and most of all with public education. So long as there remains in our society the traditional separation of church and state, those who embrace this view will be able to make loud and aggressive attack upon "atheism" and "secularism" and "godlessness." Thus, as Mrs. Meyer points out, the assertion that "morality is *exclusively* grounded on a theological dogma" strikes "at the whole texture of our democratic secular society." It amounts to a denial of a foundation principle of American society:

For the American people have built their house upon sand unless democracy, as we have always hitherto taken for granted, can generate a system of moral principles out of the

funded experiences of human beings in resolving their conflicts, in channeling their interests toward the common goal and in devising creative ways of living together in peace and freedom. . . .

To defend our American secular society against the propaganda that its morality will founder unless sustained by theological dogma, we must arouse the pride of the American people in the nobility of our ethical ideals as they were first enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and in the American Constitution. For our nation was founded upon moral principles of a grandeur which no other government has ever held aloft as a goal for its people. The Declaration of Independence, as Carl Becker points out, was "revolutionary only in the sense that it was a re-interpretation in secular and liberal terms of the Christian doctrine of the origin, nature and destiny of man. It denied that man is naturally prone to evil and error, and for that reason incapable, apart from the compulsion of state and church, of arriving at the truth or living the good life. It affirmed, on the contrary, that men are endowed by their creator with reason in order that they may progressively discover what is true, and with conscience in order that they may be disposed, in the measure of their enlightenment, to follow that which is good."

In a few pages, Mrs. Meyer shows that the historical development of the modern theory of the secular state occupied five centuries of thoughtful statesmanship—a development which reached its climax in the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights. She points out that opponents of secular social organization confuse the issue by suggesting that it commits the people who adopt and live under its rule to the naturalistic *philosophy* of secularism—an agnostic faith which is common in the universities and among educated men everywhere. The secularism of American political tradition is not a matured philosophy, but a working arrangement, in behalf of the freedom of all men, enabling each to choose his own philosophy or religion. The following passage makes this clear:

The secular ethic asks itself how conflict can be solved with the least damage to all concerned. The ethic of the religious dogmatists asks itself who is right or wrong according to their various forms of absolutes. Since these absolutes are not subject to analysis, the churches create an impasse when they try to force their absolutes on our secular society. They become intransigent propagandists in a democratic world that can function only when all the clashing elements are willing and able to compromise. As C. E. Ayres points out: "If systematic, organized inquiry teaches us anything, it teaches us that the secular activities of mankind—tool-using and crop-raising, efficient division of labor, organized co-operation, the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of that knowledge to each other and especially to the young—are the activities that unify mankind, whereas the sacred is always divisive, always culture-limited, always narrow. The very phrase 'act of faith'—*auto da fé*—has come down to us as a synonym of atrocity, whereas secular knowledge is the foundation upon which all civilization rests, even knowledge of atomic energy."

While admitting the general accuracy of this account, it ought to be noted that at least one religion, Buddhism, cannot be seriously charged with having been a divisive influence, while if secular knowledge, even to knowledge of atomic energy, is the foundation of civilization, it is surely necessary to admit that present civilization rests upon its secular foundation rather uneasily. Indeed, this uneasiness is the principal excuse or provocation for clericalism's modern bid for power.

We find three substantial reasons, though, for welcoming Mrs. Meyer's pamphlet: (1) It presents an irrefutable case from history and reason against allowing the representatives of organized religion to obtain any sort of political power in the United States; (2) It advocates the cultivation of the scientific spirit in the approach to human problems; and (3) It points out that even if "our industrial development has encouraged an over-emphasis upon materialism, the trend cannot be reversed by preaching that we should place spiritual ends above material means."

Finally, the concluding paragraph of *Democracy and Clericalism* exhibits a spirit so far above the tendentious moralizing of the clericalists that there can hardly be a question as to the merits of the issue between them:

If democracy learns to apply scientific wisdom to the reconstruction of fundamental beliefs and attitudes, it may well find a path to a new religion which will not be the possession of a small fraction of the world's population but one that brings peace and freedom to all mankind as members of an infinite whole. Humanity thus dignified would shed its fear of mortality and live in joyful dedication to the universal and to its everlasting flux and becoming. Nor would the God of this religion of religions be an anthropomorphic deity, but one whose essence would be commensurate with a universe limited neither in time nor in space.

Now for another side of the question. Mrs. Meyer singles out for special censure "a tract called *God in Education* written by Henry P. van Dusen, President of Union Theological Seminary." Dr. van Dusen, she shows, is really aggressive in his demand that God be recognized as "the Sovereign of all Reality." He quotes approvingly from another theological writer the following forthright sentiments:

All things must speak of God—or they are atheistic. History without God is chaos—Political economy without God would be selfish teaching about the acquisition of wealth—Physics without God would be a dull inquiry into certain meaningless phenomena; Ethics without God would be a varying rule or substance or center or ruling hand.

Replying to this, Mrs. Meyer finds herself considerably aroused, and we can hardly blame her:

What this implies, according to Dr. van Dusen, is not merely the institution of courses in religion in public institutions of learning or required attendance on such courses. "What it demands is a fundamental reorientation of *every* subject in the curriculum" so that it may interpret God's Truth, with the obvious necessity of rewriting every school textbook. Of course, there are advantages in knowing *the* Truth. It eliminates the painful process of searching for it and once Dr. van Dusen gets all the textbooks revised, it would no longer be necessary to write any new ones.

This is an apt, if biting response to Union's President. Yet the debate should not, we think, be dropped at this point. For there is surely a sense in which wholeness of meaning is the need of every human being, and an eagerness to ward off any sort of revival of religious totalitarianism—for that is what van Dusen proposes—ought not to blind us to the hungers which remain unsatisfied by the presently available alternative to "total belief."

Perhaps we *do* need "a fundamental reorientation of *every* subject in the curriculum"—and need it just as surely as Dr. van Dusen is not the man to give it to us. At the risk of being thought crypto-religious, we are bound to admit a deep attraction for the sentence in *The Bhagavad-*

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## OPEN SESAME!

In every period of despair, such as the present, attention is focussed upon the young, as if in them lay our last hope. To set about re-educating the world is, however, an almost hopeless task. To give it real meaning, the execution of such a program would entail the aid of exceptional minds, the very ones whose counsel the world has ever refused to follow. Every great sage has maintained that it is impossible to impart wisdom. And it is wisdom we need, not more knowledge nor even "better" knowledge. We need wisdom of life, which is a kind of knowledge that only initiates have thus far been known to possess.

In the opening pages of *Walden*, Thoreau writes: "The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of anything, it is very likely to be my good behavior. What demon possessed me that I obeyed so well? You may say the wisest thing you can, old man,—you have lived seventy years, not without honor of a kind,—I hear an irresistible voice which invites me away from all that. . . ."

Rimbaud, with all the fire and genius of youth, said: "Everything we are taught is false." Jesus set about to destroy the old way of life, reminding us that the only true guide is the Spirit within us. And does not the Zen master, in his endeavor to free the mind of its trammels, employ any and every means to shatter our way of thinking?

In the book called *Siddhartha*, Hermann Hesse makes it clear repeatedly that to cope with the world his enlightened one relied only upon three "noble and invincible arts"—"how to think, how to wait, and how to fast." Is it necessary to remark how altogether lacking is modern man with respect to these? What is worse, he is not even aware of the lack.

What is the great problem? Is it to develop beings who will be different in spirit from those who begat them? If so, how does one go about undoing the damage of the centuries? Can we raise children who will undo the evil we have done? How do we bring about a "brave, new world"? By education, by moral and religious instruction, by eugenics, by revolution? Is it possible to bring about a new order of men, to make a new heaven and a new earth? Or is it an age-old delusion?

The great exemplars all led simple lives. Inspiring though they be, no one follows in their footsteps. Only a rare few have even attempted to do so. Yet now and then, even today, a unique individual does break away, breaks free of the treadmill, as it were, and demonstrates that it is possible, even in this sad world, to lead one's own life. We know very little about the secret springs which enable such individuals to lift themselves above the great mass of mankind. All we know is that each one found the way for himself, and of himself. We suspect that the chosen path was never an easy one, never one that the man of common sense would elect to follow. "The Way is not difficult; but you must avoid choosing." There lies the great difficulty.

The men I speak of—gods in the eyes of most men—were all revolutionaries in the deepest sense of the word. The great thing about them, that which they had in common, was the ability to revolutionize themselves. In the process society itself was levelled from top to bottom. What they urged upon us, what they demonstrated first in their own person, was to think afresh, to look upon the world with new eyes. They did not address themselves exclusively to youth, but to one and all, regardless of age, sex, condition, belief, pursuit or education. They spoke not of gradual amelioration, not of ten- or twenty-year programs, but of instantaneous conversion. They were possessed of certitude and authority, inner authority, and they worked miracles.

Men still continue to worship and adore these shining figures. And in doing so they reject them. As for the pillars of society who exploit their names, they have long inoculated us with the very opposite of all these superior beings represented. This strange and contradictory behavior, which seems ingrained in men, has led to an impasse which can only be described as a kind of "cosmic schizophrenia."

Meanwhile "the way," is always open for any and every one to follow. But who dares any longer to point the way?

The very first line of the booklet called *Open Sesame—Books Are Keys*—reads thus: "The masses of the world are mentally starved." One could put it much stronger. Not only are the masses mentally starved, they are emotionally and spiritually crippled. And it has been thus from the dawn of history. Madame Scheu-Riesz, the author of the booklet and the initiator of the delightful series of little books for children called "United World Books," is enlisting the aid of eminent men in various walks of life to help put at the disposal of youth the world over the best that exists in world literature and at a price within reach. Indeed, she has already done much to make this wish a reality.

It would take a bold spirit to say that Helene Scheu-Riesz and those who have rallied to her support are laboring in vain. Who does not wish to see a united world, a world at peace, a world in which health, reason, justice, love and joy of life prevail? Even our "enemies" profess the same desire. We are all advocates of a better world, and we are all the devil's disciples. We want to change the other fellow, not ourselves; we want our children to be better than us, but do nothing to make ourselves more worthy of our children.

The moment we begin to make new plans for the young, to select their reading, for example, or their playmates, the moment we begin to reorganize life, to separate the wheat from the chaff, as it were, we are up against something more than a problem, we are up against a conundrum. To judge, to select, to discriminate, to rearrange, reapportion—can there be any end to it ever? Try to assume that you

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### **SESAME BOOKS FOR CHILDREN**

SINCE Henry Miller's Review article turned out to be not a review at all, but something perhaps more interesting to readers, we take this space to fill in the facts about the Open Sesame Series of United World Books. There are twelve of these little books in the set, which sells at one dollar a set, and may be ordered in the United States from Profile Press, 125 West 25th Street, New York 1, N.Y.

The first book is devoted to the story of United World Books (previously told in MANAS for Feb. 17, 1954). There is a book of nursery rhymes, one devoted to the Christmas carols of many lands, and another of pictures which illustrate the passage of the seasons. The rest of the books are taken up with stories drawn from the fairy tales and folklore of many countries—Denmark, ancient Greece, China, Japan, Holland, Russia, France, and America.

We liked best of all *The River of Gold*, which is the story of the Greek King Midas, set in an ingenious frame for better appreciation by the young. One thing that the reader is bound to notice in reading these stories from so many countries and cultures is the basic similarity of the folk quality in them all. We did, however, come across one oddity. The *Danish Tales*, we noted, seem curiously oblivious of the moral question, for in both the stories in this book the ingenious rascality of the leading character is rewarded by health, wealth, and everlasting happiness. While there is no reason to require that stories for children be heavily instructive, most of the other stories completely satisfy the reader's sense of justice.

A word as to the format of the books: American parents who have come to expect of children's reading a profligate use of color and elaborate illustration may feel, when first seeing the Sesame Series, that these books cannot "compete" with the output of American publishers. But here, we think, is an opportunity for parents to apply a suggestion offered recently in *Children . . . and Ourselves* (quoted from Mary Ellen Chase)—the idea of making a real "event" of the acquisition of a new book, or books, with emphasis on the *story* rather than its embellishments. Then, too, these stories have already brought to children who had no books at all a sense of being able to start their own *libraries* with the best of children's stories from all the world, so that there is already a bit of "tradition" about the Sesame Series.

### **REVIEW—(continued)**

are invested with the wisdom, the mercy and the powers of the Creator. Now put the world in order! Is this not the surest way to send one to the madhouse?

America has given the world one writer, the only one I know of, who sang in every line he wrote of acceptance. (Let us not forget, either, that in his day he was regarded as an obscene writer, an immoral person!) This doctrine of acceptance, the most difficult yet simple of all the radical ideas man has proposed to himself, embodies the understanding that the world is made up of conflicting members in all stages of evolution and devolution, that good and evil co-exist even though the one be but the shadow of the other, and that the world, for all its ills and shortcomings, was made for our enjoyment. It does not convey the idea that life is to be enjoyed when or if we all reach the stage of perfection. The salient idea is that life may, can and should be enjoyed now, under whatever conditions. The thought is so beautifully expressed by Hermann Hesse in the book previously mentioned that I am impelled to quote.

"Listen, my friend! [Siddhartha speaking.] I am a sinner and you are a sinner, but someday the sinner will be Brahma again, will someday attain Nirvana, will someday become a Buddha. Now this 'someday' is illusion; it is only a comparison [ist nur Gleichnis!]. The sinner is not on the way to a Buddha-like state; he is not evolving, although our thinking cannot conceive things otherwise. No, the potential Buddha already exists in the sinner; his future is already there. The potential hidden Buddha must be recognized in him, in you, in everybody. The world, Govinda, is not imperfect or slowly evolving along a long path to perfection. No, it is perfect at every moment; every sin already carries grace within it, all small children are potential old men, all sucklings have death within them, all dying people—eternal life. It is not possible for one person to see how far another is on the way; the Buddha exists in the robber and dice player; the robber exists in the Brahmin. During deep meditation it is possible to dispel time, to see simultaneously all the past, present and future, and then everything is good, everything is perfect, everything is Brahman. Therefore, it seems to me that everything that exists is good, death as well as life, sin as well as holiness, wisdom as well as folly. Everything is necessary, everything needs only my agreement, my assent, my loving understanding; then all is well with me and nothing can harm me. I learned through my body and soul that it was necessary for me to sin, that I needed lust, that I had to strive for property and experience nausea and the depths of despair in order to learn not to resist them, in

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**MANAS is a journal of independent inquiry, concerned with study of the principles which move world society on its present course, and with search for contrasting principles—that may be capable of supporting intelligent idealism under the conditions of life in the twentieth century. MANAS is concerned, therefore, with philosophy and with practical psychology, in as direct and simple a manner as its editors and contributors can write. The word "manas" comes from a common root suggesting "man" or "the thinker." Editorial articles are unsigned, since MANAS wishes to present ideas and viewpoints, not personalities.**

**The Publishers**



## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

A RECENT *California Teacher*, official publication of the California Federation of Teachers, furnishes abundant evidence that few educators of our time are living in ivory towers. Forced by political pressures to examine the strength of their own beliefs in "freedom of expression and instruction," the profession has gradually developed a core of effective resistance. The November-December number, for instance, contains a competent and spirited survey of "witch hunts" in the city schools of New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. (For copies of this issue, write Paul McGinnis, Treasurer of the CFT, 917 Galvin Drive, El Cerrito, Calif.) Here are some sample passages, based on news releases and feature articles appearing in the *Nation* and the *Reporter*:

More than 250 New York City teachers have been ousted during the witchhunt of the last four years. Most resigned or retired rather than submit to questions concerning past or present political beliefs and associations. Eighteen public school teachers and 12 municipal college teachers were fired without charges or hearing because they had invoked the Fifth Amendment before one of the Congressional Committees (McCarthy, Jenner, Velde, McCarran). About 15 substitute licenses were revoked. Thirty-one public school teachers were dismissed after trials on charges of "insubordination and conduct unbecoming a teacher." The first teacher to be questioned—a teacher of first grade children—then committed suicide on the eve of Christmas, 1948.

Typical is the judgment expressed by Col. Arthur Levitt (later to become president of the board of education) when he recommended the dismissal of seven teachers on December 2, 1952, after presiding over their trials: "The respondents adduced the testimony of a long succession of colleagues, supervisors, parents and former pupils, demonstrating their superior talents as teachers. It was demonstrated that these are teachers of long service and with records of conspicuously fine accomplishment, frequently under adverse conditions.

"Your committee is satisfied that these are indeed teachers of a high order of ability..."

Only one teacher was ever charged with membership in the Communist Party.

Aside from this one case, the teachers are not told who their accusers are, or on what evidence or information they are being questioned.

In most cases, it appears, dismissals occurred because of the resentment of teachers who dared to protest inquisitions about private views. Nor did loyalty committees limit themselves, even, to discussion of viewpoints on political and social questions. Though most investigating committees claim to be unconcerned with details of personal life, such questions as the following have repeatedly been framed:

"Do you know the following people...?"

"Were you ever at the home of...?"

"Have you ever engaged in any discussion in regard to foreign affairs during the past two years?"

"Did you ever say that the United States was imperialistic?"

The editors of the *California Teacher* conclude the "New York story" by quoting the dissenting opinion of Justice William O. Douglas in a case upholding the validity of "loyalty board questionings." Douglas wrote:

The law inevitably turns the school system into a spying project. Regular loyalty reports on the teachers must be made. The principals become detectives; the students, the parents, the community become informers. Ears are cocked for tell-tale signs of disloyalty. . . .

What happens under this law is typical of what happens in a police state. Teachers are under constant surveillance; their pasts are combed for signs of disloyalty; their utterances are watched for clues to dangerous thoughts. A pall is cast over the classroom. . . .

The guilt of the teacher should turn on overt acts. So long as she is a law-abiding citizen, so long as her performance within the public school system meets professional standards, her private life, her political philosophy, her social creed should not be the cause of reprisals against her.

The sad tale in Philadelphia has been much the same, despite notable efforts on the part of the American Civil Liberties Union. Various acts and provisions were pushed through the legislature by political pressure, creating machinery which afforded "junior McCarthies" ample power to interrogate and dismiss:

In these circumstances, 32 teachers were suspended without pay. One resigned, five retired, and 26 were fired. None was reinstated. (Three teachers' employed by private schools were given hearings and returned to their jobs.) Since then the superintendent has gone power-mad, calling teachers in for questioning on a much broader range of topics which now include the teacher's thinking on political matters. He told one teacher that the teacher's associations did not matter because the teacher thought like a Communist, and refused to permit the teacher to return to school. The teacher had tenure and a signed contract, but has never been given a hearing and is out. To show the popularity of all this, staff meetings of principals have been ordered to get faculties to send individual greeting cards to the superintendent on his birthday. A touching gesture, this.

In Los Angeles the tremendous swelling of southland population adds an ironic twist to the efforts of the inquisitors. Since 1950, despite this growth, the number of new teachers prepared each year for both elementary and secondary schools has declined from 115,000 to 91,000. In 1954 there were 6.5 fewer new teachers than in 1953, and the decrease is expected to continue. Ample evidence exists that the profession is becoming more and more unattractive, solely on the grounds of distaste for subjection to heresy-hunting procedures; salaries during the same period, have increased rather than decreased, and appropriations have reached a new high.

A Los Angeles group, called Teachers' Defense Committee, has not been idle. Robert Hutchins' article in *Look* (March 9, 1954), "Are Our Teachers Afraid to Teach?" was distributed widely to women's clubs, churches, fraternal orders, etc.—1000 reprints being secured for this purpose. Subsequently, Dr. Albert Einstein's famous letter to a discharged teacher in New York was reprinted, by permission, and mailed to 6,000 persons. Dr. Einstein had written:

The strength of the Constitution lies entirely in the determination of each citizen to defend it. . . . The "intellectuals" in the widest sense of the word are, however, in a special position since they have, thanks to their special training, a particularly strong influence on the formation of public opinion. This is the reason why those who are about to lead us toward an authoritarian government are particularly concerned with intimidating and muzzling that group. It is therefore important for the intellectuals to do their duty.

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# FRONTIERS

## Who Live to Tell the Tale

ANEURIN BEVAN'S "My Journey Among the Communists," lead article in the *Progressive* for December, is of particular interest to this Department. While we know very little about Mr. Bevan himself, save that he has been frequently called a "stormy petrel" of English politics and has bounced in and out of favor with the Labor Party at various times, he has shared one sort of experience with the editors of MANAS: It seems that Mr. Bevan's journey to Russia and Communist China brought forth spirited condemnation, even though he went as a member of an official L.P. delegation. Upon return, the travelers were greeted with suspicion of "appeasement" tendencies, of "playing into the hands of Russia," "disloyalty to the British Commonwealth," etc., etc. Now, it happens that publication in MANAS of a Scottish traveler's first-hand impression of conditions in Russia brought somewhat similar reactions, although on a much smaller scale. Just what was wrong with letting an innocent Scotsman say his piece is not altogether clear, but it is quite clear that some who read that particular issue of MANAS believed that no self-respecting magazine should have truck with anyone foolish enough to go behind the Iron Curtain.

Mr. Bevan's opening paragraphs define and meet the issue quite simply:

Why did the British Labor Party delegation visit China? And why did the Chinese Government invite us to do so? These questions have been asked in accents varying from crude hostility to credulous expectancy. It is a depressing comment on the state of international affairs that they should be asked at all.

There is nothing unreasonable in one half of the human race wishing to know what is happening to the other half. But such a deterioration in international affairs has taken place that even attempts at ordinary communication are given a sinister interpretation.

It is disquieting to note that the tone of many of the attacks that have been made on the Labor delegation imply a wish that neither the iron nor the bamboo curtain should be penetrated. This reverses the situation that was thought to exist. In the past it was the Russians, and later the Chinese, who were accused of wishing to shut themselves off from communication with the West.

What a strange belief to see growing up in Britain and the United States, where men are presumably proudest of the democratic tradition! The essence of democracy, after all, lies in faith that men should always work to break down the barriers between differing cultural, religious and racial backgrounds. After a long, painful, but at least sometimes inspiring advance toward liberality of thought, the majority of Americans and Englishmen now seem to be making a full circle back to closed-mindedness. Meanwhile Communist China, for instance, according to Mr. Bevan, definitely allows more liberty "than there was in Britain in the days of Cromwell after the Civil War—

certainly more religious liberty." The belief continues to grow that all the Russians and all the Chinese, save the Chiang Kai-shek segment, are a different order of beings from ourselves. For all these reasons, the publication of Mr. Bevan's article by the *Progressive* is a step toward sanity.

Bevan answers the question about the purpose of the Labor Party Delegation's visit by saying: "We desired to find out what was taking place in New China and we were concerned to assess the possibilities of peaceful coexistence: nothing more sinister than that. If, as a result, we are accused of appeasement, we plead guilty to the charge, if by appeasement is meant a desire to find some other way out of the international deadlock than a benumbing drift to inevitable war." The British laborite, it should be made clear, is not bemused into thinking that anything except a dictatorship obtains in either country. He does, however, have an interesting theory about why having discussions with the Soviets now appear to be easier instead of more difficult—at the very time when western diplomats have almost given up hoping:

It has always been my view that the Soviet leaders were difficult to deal with after the war not because they were strong, but because of their overwhelming consciousness of weakness. I left the Soviet Union with the impression that its leaders are for the first time beginning to feel on top of their domestic situation, and so can face the world with the knowledge that any agreements they might make in external issues will not be accounted to them as weakness. At least that is an advance in the right direction.

Mr. Bevan is an old trade union man and socialist believer; we were therefore particularly interested to note a passage toward the end of his article. To the question of whether trade unions exist at all in new China, he replies that while they do exist, they are, of course, very unlike British or American unions, being "mainly instruments of government policy." He then remarks that "we have yet to work out what the character of our trade unions would be in a Socialist state. The functions of trade unions undergo a change when they become organs of administration as well as agencies of collective bargaining by the workers." Now this, we submit, is something for all those who have followed the liberal political tradition to ponder. So far as we know, a successful blending of the best features of trade unionism and State socialism has never been reached, even in theory. And if Western socialists can't work the matter out even in theory, it seems a little unfair for them to expect the Chinese to solve this problem in a couple of years, when they have 602 million of their own people to worry about and an expected yearly population increase of 12 million!

In the same issue of the *Progressive*, Stuart Chase contributes correlative thoughts under the heading, "How to Smash a Prejudice." This turns out, according to the author, to be something even harder than winning friends and in-



## RELIGION IN EDUCATION

(Continued)

*Gita* which reads: "Whatever thou doest, O son of Kunti, . . . commit each [act] unto me," which means, as we read the text, that everything a man thinks and feels, everything he contemplates doing, and finally, does, ought to have some underlying connection with what he understands to be the meaning of his life. The injunction is that we become philosophers, and one finds very little in modern education to urge men to pursue this ideal.

Truth, we are confident, is more represented by an attitude than by an idea or a conclusion. Truth, if the word has any meaning, is a movement, not a stopping place. This, we think, is the essence of the scientific spirit, and at this level of definition it ought also to be the essence of the religious spirit. Hence the dogmatists with whom Mrs. Meyer finds so much fault, who invite us to go back to ancient stopping places—ancient creeds—are really the enemies of true religion. But if true religion is conceivable, and if we should desire to be its friend instead of its enemy, there is plainly the duty of trying to foster the spirit of endless quest in all phases of education; and not only the quest of facts, but the quest for meaning.

How shall we frame the facts we know within an arch of meaning? If we disdain, as we should, to accept the defeatist formulations of the creeds, we cannot let a disdainful attitude spread to the idea of transcendental quest itself. The great men whom we love and admire—what-

fluencing people. Mr. Chase, as most know, believes that one way to batter down the bastions of prejudice is by semantic disciplines. In his present review of Harvard psychologist Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice*, he stresses the distinction between "minus" and "plus" biases:

"Prejudice" being a roomy term, one can have a set in favor of something, as well as against something. Thus patriotism is a plus prejudice; distrust of all foreigners a minus one. McCarthyites refuse to credit any facts disparaging to their hero, even from the highest quarters, and write letters full of abusive violence and bad English to those who publish such facts.

Allport chiefly confines his analysis to what he calls "ethnic prejudice," a minus variety "directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group." This includes such snarl words as "Nigger," "Wop," "Red," "Greaser," "Unbeliever," "Dog of a Christian," "International Banker," and similar symbols of emotional hatred. I remember a young radical years ago who used to go around saying, "I hate the rich!" He rather liked such rich people as he happened to meet, but he hated the symbol—a fine case of ethnic prejudice. This is the ring in the circus which causes the most trouble in the world today. "To have enemies we need labels."

The trouble with seeing nothing favorable about any of the Russians and the Chinese is the trouble it causes in us. We generate two kinds of prejudice at the same time—"minus" in respect to whatever lies behind the bamboo or iron curtain, and "plus" in respect to how we are the greatest country that could ever be. But how can a country be the greatest if two kinds of prejudice abound? Unless, that is, "great" means being so strong that one need be neither rational nor just.

ever their nominal faith or belief or unbelief—have so lived that everything they did might be regarded as an act of devotion. There have also been communities and times when a kind of reverence for life has pervaded daily existence for all. Why should we think that this spirit has to be—or even could be—"indoctrinated" in order to prosper and survive?

There are hosts of intangible considerations here. It may be that the intangible considerations—as inaccessible to formal science as to dogmatic, dead-letter religion—embody the secret which a man like Dr. van Dusen hopes to capture with the shackles of an "official" religion in modern education. He cannot find it this way, of course, and his eagerness to do so would be enough to make us skirt the Union Theological Seminary by at least twenty or thirty miles, were we to set out on any serious quest for the Holy Grail. But the secret may be nonetheless real.

If we wanted to get bitter about this, we would not berate Dr. van Dusen so much as his spiritual ancestors who made religion into the kind of a thing which caused patriots and educators to demand separation of church and state in self-defense, and in defense of their children. What sort of religion is it that becomes a source of virulent prejudice? What sort of faith has the tendency to make "act of faith" commonly translated to mean, "burn them at the stake"?

The history of Western thought is very largely a history of the partial recovery of the Western mind from this mutilation of its finer feelings, this inversion of the religious instinct. If religion could have been preserved from dogma, if the feeling of aspiration and devotion could have been protected from the exploitation of ritual and the almost indecent self-abasement of human beings before the altar of an absolutely incomprehensible "Creator," the true spirit of philosophic religion might today be the informing principle of every educational undertaking.

What we regret in Mrs. Meyer's pamphlet is the assumption, natural enough, that the situation of a society in which formal declaration of separation of church and state is necessary to a free life of the mind is a normal situation. We take the view that a state which is in danger of being captured by clerical politicians is a very poor state indeed, and that the culture which can protect itself against this fate only by the constant watchfulness of an embattled minority is a culture which suffers from deep-seated flaws in its basic orientation toward life and the meaning of human experience.

There is, in short, a hunger in people which invites the attention and the efforts of dogmatic religionists. The cynics jeer and say that this hunger is no more than the appetite for miracles of the great unwashed. The demagogues and Bible-pounders make a living from it and the 100 per cent "rationalists" try to cope with it by issuing contemptuous tracts attacking religion. The Humanists attempt to design a humanitarian religion which meets the approval of numerous intellectuals, but still the problem remains unsolved. . . .

We have a note, set down before this article was begun, to be sure to say something about the egotism of the critic who finds fault with every solution. Obviously, we have written ourselves into the bottom of a deep critical hole,

even though this was not really the intent. The difficulty is plainly that there is no "group" solution for a problem of this sort. This, we think, is the only resolution for the issue of church and state, and the only negative solvent for the sins of organized religion.

After all, when it comes to the finalities of life—and it is in these that religion consists—you cannot take the word of anyone else for an answer. The words of others may mark beginnings, but never endings. This may be the highest religious truth.

#### REVIEW—(continued)

order to learn to love the world, and no longer compare it with some kind of desired imaginary world, some imaginary vision of perfection, but to leave it as it is, to love it and be glad to belong to it. . . ."

So, let us begin with "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves"—the first title in the series of United World (Open Sesame) booklets. Why not? It is a wonderful tale, and as a child I enjoyed it hugely. As to whether it did me harm or good, I am unable to say. I do know that some of the books which I devoured avidly, and of which I am even more uncertain (as to harm or good), will never be included in this or any other series of books for children. There are certain books which no serious "educator" would offer to the young, yet these very books opened my eyes as no "good" book could ever have done. The good books, as they are called, were usually so dull that they were incapable of doing harm or good. The point I make, if it is not already clear, is that no one, certainly not the parent or instructor, can possibly foresee which book or books, which sentence, which thought, which phrase sometimes it may be that will open the doors of vision for the child. We are given so much learned, pompous talk about reading for instruction, reading for inspiration, reading for a purpose, and so on. What I have discovered for myself, and I do not think my experience is unique, is that the books I enjoyed most, no matter what their specific gravity, were the ones that did the most for me . . . encouraged, inspired, instructed, awakened. . . . whatever you will. What we learn, of value, we get indirectly, largely unconsciously. It is too often stressed, in my opinion, that we learn through sorrow and suffering. I do not deny this to be true, but I hold that we also learn, and perhaps more lastingly, through moments of joy, of bliss, of ecstasy. Struggle has its importance, but we tend to overrate it. Harmony, serenity, bliss do not come from struggle but from surrender.

Let us not worry too much about what our children feed on. Let them feed, forage and fend for themselves as we do, sharing our problems, nurturing our dreams, inspiring our love. Let them remain what they are, a very real part of this "one world" to which we all belong whether we know it or not, admit it or not. We can spare them nothing we do not spare ourselves. If we wish to protect them, we must learn how to protect ourselves. But do we want to protect ourselves? Do we know what "protection" really means? Or what it involves? If we did we would long since have dropped the word from our vocabulary.

I trust that Madame Scheu-Riesz will not think I am against her program. What I am against, if anything, is the illusion that reading the right books will make for us the

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right citizens. It is our destiny to live with the wrong as well as the right kind of citizens, and to learn from them, the wrong-minded ones, as much or more as from the others. If we have not yet succeeded—after how many centuries?—in eliminating from life the elements which plague us perhaps we need to question life more closely. Perhaps our refusal to face reality is the only ill we suffer from—and all the rest but illusion and delusion.

"The Way is not difficult; but you must avoid choosing!" Or, as another ancient one put it—"The Way is near, but men seek it afar. It is in easy things, but men seek it in difficult things."

HENRY MILLER

Big Sur, California

#### CHILDREN—(continued)

I see this duty in refusing to cooperate in any undertaking that violates the constitutional rights of the individual. This holds in particular for all inquisitions that are concerned with the private life and the political affiliations of the citizens. Whoever cooperates in such a case becomes an accessory to acts of violation or invalidation of the Constitution.

This activity by teachers cannot help but increase the value to the community of all concerned classroom instructors. Therein, we think, lies ground for hope in the future. As a business executive recently turned social critic (Shepard Mead) has remarked: "It's almost impossible to stop thinking, once you get started." Perhaps the instructors and professors who survive this debacle of the 1950's will really have inquiring minds; even the idea of compulsory education is currently receiving serious questioning in the *California Teacher*.

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